

# Worksession

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| <b>Agenda Item #</b> | 7                                  |
| <b>Meeting Date</b>  | January 3, 2005                    |
| <b>Prepared By</b>   | Rob Inerfeld<br>Senior Planner     |
| <b>Approved By</b>   | Wayne Hobbs<br>Deputy City Manager |

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| <b>Discussion Item</b>       | Gateway and Wayfinding Program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Background</b>            | <p>This project last came before the City Council in November when the preliminary sign designs were presented. At that meeting, Council directed staff to solicit additional community input in the design of the sign system. The community input received as a result of this effort is attached for your review.</p> <p>The plans have been presented to the State Highway Administration (SHA) and a final meeting of the Wayfinding Advisory Committee has been held since the November Council meeting. City staff was advised that SHA would not approve the proposed arrow design nor the proposed font size on streets with speed limits above 25 mph (New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard). The Wayfinding Advisory Committee has recommended that the City ask SHA for an exemption on these two issues.</p> <p>Terry Healy of Gallagher will present the final conceptual sign designs to the Council during the January 3 worksession. The designs have been revised since the last Council presentation based on input received from the community and the Wayfinding Advisory Committee.</p> |
| <b>Policy</b>                | “Focus on proactive initiatives to maintain the economic vitality of Takoma Park’s commercial districts, encourage smart growth development, support transportation enhancements, and increase the local property tax base, while maintaining the character of the community.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Fiscal Impact</b>         | <p>The project is funded by a \$60,000 State revitalization grant. These funds will pay for design and engineering as well as the first phase of implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and Engineering: \$42,280</li> <li>• Implementation: 17,720</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Attachments</b>           | Summary of community input received.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Recommendation</b>        | Provide feedback to consultant and staff regarding the sign designs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Special Consideration</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

## Community Input Received on Gateway/Wayfinding Signage System

### Color

- One is that I don't really like the colors. The blue is typical of so many other types of signs. I think the orange, yellow and green of the City's logo is nice and could be worked into the signs more. In particular, as it looks on my computer screen, the green "message sign" on the primary gateway sign doesn't look like a nice contrast at all with the blue coupled with the logo--seems like a teal that clashes with the green in the logo. I realize however, that these may not be displaying perfectly.
- I like the sign colors.
- The blue and green colors seem a little boring to me. For my taste, bolder colors of orange, yellow or red would be more exciting.
- I think it will be a really nice addition to the town. I like the sign designs and colors that are set forth on the Web site.
- We like the colors and overall design.
- I like the color and overall design, especially the mission-style ironwork around the signs. The typeface is easy to read, although could be a bit more unique and elegant, and less like a typical street sign.
- The colors are relatively attractive, though I would prefer dark greens and greens replacing the dark blues and blues, as they would interfere less with the "Tree City" feel of Takoma Park. I believe they would still be visible enough, especially since the lettering and center logo would not be green, but if the background color were green it would blend into the surrounding landscaping a little better.
- Colors - they're fine.
- I like the colors as shown in the PDF image.
- Yes, I like the color scheme. I'm wondering how well the signs will stand out, however, when placed against in their locations. Maybe some accent colors somewhere (yellow or red) could be added to the signs so that drivers, bikers, and pedestrians can more quickly spot them in the clutter of bushes, trees, and commercial areas.
- Colors used, I like the colors but not the font. I also like the BF Gilbert 1887 graphics over the county seal.
- I like the colors, except that the green doesn't look particularly good with the blue and doesn't seem like it would have good readability. The white lettering on dark green of the existing signs is very easily read from a moving car, I might add.

### Tag Line – Message on Bottom of Gateway Sign

- I personally think **Tree City** is best because it's unique and reflects what we care about.
- I prefer something like **Azalea City** or **Tree City** to messages such as watch for pedestrians. A main street community is ok
- I think that **A Main Street Community** works best. Possibly "Watch for Pedestrians" right downtown.
- For the banner, **Azalea City** conveys a sense of an attractive, hometown type of community.
- For the green primary gateway sign, I would prefer for the default message to be **Please drive carefully or Watch for pedestrians** - living on Ethan Allen I'm sensitive to those issues of safety.

- The standard message on the gateway sign should say **Founded in 1890**.
- The Primary Gateway sign message should be more unique and specific to the special community that is Takoma Park. Something in the way of **All are Welcome** or **Welcome Friends** that would speak to the heart of our open and friendly town and the philosophy that established it. Perhaps there's a short quote from BF Gilbert that could be used, etc.
- I prefer **A Main Street Community** for the Primary Gateway, with separate signs (not the Primary Gateway sign) along 410 and Carroll with the message "Please Drive Carefully".
- **Welcome** is good. "A Main Street Community" somehow sounds too much like "family values," which, when people invoke it, never seems to include my family, which consists of a man and woman married to each other but without kids. I like "Azalea City" just fine. "Please, no admonitions like "Drive Carefully" or "Watch for Pedestrians" ... I personally prefer friendlier messages like "Pedestrian-Friendly Zone," "A Walkable City," "The City That Walks," "We Love to Walk," or "The City Where Life's a Little Slower" (just suggestions).
- My vote would be for **A Main Street Community** in the green area. When I see "azalea city" or "tree city," I wonder, What does that mean, anyway? But when I see "a main street community," the meaning, to me anyway, is obvious. "Welcome" seems too generic, and in my opinion, although the messages are important, "watch for pedestrians" and "please drive carefully" seem not to convey the warmth and friendliness of Takoma Park that we want to give as a first impression. Perhaps we could put up signs with those messages in other, high traffic/pedestrian locations.
- I like **Azalea City** or **A Main Street Community** – although driver/pedestrian safety issues are important I don't feel that these signs are the appropriate location for this message
- I have reviewed the proposed signs online and recommend that the "primary gateway" sign be re-designed to better reflect the historic character of the City. Wording such as **Welcome to Historic Takoma Park -- Founded 1883** would give visitors a sense of the City's historic character and would enhance heritage tourism to the City and thus boost economic development.
- As to the message on the panel below the primary gateway signs, I think that **Please Drive Carefully** is the best option. The locations mentioned are heavily traveled, and this message seems more appropriate than the aesthetic reference to azaleas. Moreover, careful driving includes watching out for pedestrians (unless the world has changed more than I am aware).
- All of them will do, but they don't ring my chimes. But I like having events listed on them, such as the festivals, arbor day sale, etc. When family, friends, clients and others visit me, I often get asked, "what does 'Azalea City' mean?" Or Tree City or Main Street Community. Just got asked this on Sunday when my sister came to town. So, these messages really don't carry much weight because visitors don't know what they mean. I don't care for "please drive safely" or the other ubiquitous ones. People generally do drive safely, and those that don't won't be influenced by the sign...they're driving too fast to read it! I'd prefer a message that's more informational about the city and its unique community, something like:
  - **A city that cares...and acts on its principles.**
  - **A city that acts locally and globally.**

- The sovereign independent republic of Takoma Park, home of the nuclear-free-range speed bump and Roscoe the Rooster. Ok, just joking on the last one.
- **How about having a city-wide contest for the tag lines?** Have folks submit their suggestions, have a small committee select the 10 best ones, and then have residents vote on the city's website for their favorites. Select the 3 or 5 that get the most votes and use them. Interchange the signs with the different tag lines every 3-4 months or so.

### **Name for Municipal Building Area**

- Also, regarding the municipal center and library complex, let's not be bureaucratic. Let's call it something like **Takoma Center** or **Takoma Plaza**
- I prefer **Community Center** to refer to the library, municipal offices, etc. It seems more welcoming. Municipal facilities seems like something that might have restricted access.
- **Municipal Center** is my vote.
- I would call the new complex the **Municipal Center**.
- My suggestion would be to specifically mention the library on the sign, in addition to the municipal center (or whatever the campus ends up being called - my vote is for **Municipal Center**).
- The municipal building location sign should say **City Campus** and list all the facilities.
- I think **Municipal Center** is best, as that is how most of the City now refers to that area, and because "Community Center" seems more limited in definition (not usually including municipal offices), and "Municipal Facilities" also seems limited (not usually including a library and community center). However, I also strongly suggest that there be separate signage noting the Library and Police at that location, so that anyone driving by can easily find those locations. Perhaps the main sign could include sub-items specifying "City Offices", "Library", and "Police".
- **Municipal Center** works for me: It's less sterile than "Municipal Facilities" and seems clear enough that there are several buildings involved. "Community Center" might leave some people wondering where the offices are.
- My choice would be **Community Center** for the library campus. "Municipal" seems too cold a word that doesn't capture Takoma Park.
- I think **Community Center** does an appropriate job of referring to the City Hall / Community Center/Library area.
- I would prefer the **Municipal Center** designation on the "campus" sign over the other alternatives. To me, "community center" carries a recreational connotation, not business, and "facilities" sounds too much like public restrooms!
- "Community Center" and "Municipal Facilities" don't convey that it has the city hall and police station. I think too many visitors will be confused what's there. "Municipal Center" is the term I've seen used most frequently around the country, so I think many people will recognize what the building houses. However, "Municipal Center" doesn't clearly state that we have the library and police station there, too. So, how about 2 or more lines like this:

### **Municipal Center**

City Hall | Library | Police | Sam Abbott Community Center

## General/Other

- After looking at the ECD website, I find these signs a little stiff, a little formal, and a little bland for Takoma Park. They don't reflect the homey bungalows and cottages and Victorians that comprise the residential areas of the city, or the lively little shopping areas. The proposed signs, to my eyes, have a somewhat "industrial" look rather than reflecting a neighborhood or community. I do like their clarity. I think they are very well designed to display simple messages in a short span of time. The plan seems comprehensive and I appreciate the design elements that tie them together.
- Regarding the signs themselves, I like the shapes and the posts that will hold them up but have a concern about the design of the actual signs. There is inconsistent use of the seal of the city. The only sign where the seal is big enough to see and recognize is the tertiary entrance sign. The sign for these entrances consists of the seal and nothing else. The car will be going slow enough to read the sign and I think they are very becoming. The directional sign has no seal at all and the other signs have seals that are so small that they are useless. I think the main entrances to the city should have the seal displayed large enough so that the driver can at least get the symbolism of the picture in the center of the seal. If the driver can't make out the seal, I think it just wastes space that could be used for making the "City of" a bit larger and making the "Takoma Park" considerably larger. If we keep the seal on these signs, I think we need to make the signs larger so drivers can at least see the sun rising (or setting) over the "mountains" of Takoma Park.
- Although I like City of TkPk seal, I am unclear as to its purpose on the round sign. I think incorporating the seal in more pedestrian-friendly information signs is more useful (ie; Historic District sign).
- I like the idea of an "artist area" on the Identification Signs, especially if local artists are used.
- Love the typeface, but it needs to be a bolder weight. The light-medium weight doesn't have enough contrast for reading it at a distance or while driving by. How about Extra Bold, Black or Heavy?
- It was just a week or two ago that we were talking to our neighbors about identifying our neighborhood. Not only do the proposed signs highlight the uniqueness of Takoma Park and give the residents a sense of belonging, but they also add to our collective property values. All three are reasons that I would like to stress not to forget Hillwood Manor. Tucked away on the often dubbed "wrong side of New Hampshire", we need the sense of belonging more than most subdivisions of Takoma Park. It concerns me a little that we will remain the "forgotten child" when you speak of entry signs on the corner of New Hampshire and East West Highway and I am writing to make sure that we'd be considered as a "tertiary gateway" for signs at both entries into our subdivision. I think the signs are phenomenal and I hope you can implement your plans without delay. Please let me know if you'd like me to clarify any details.
- I think the signs look great. My only inclination is to suggest something slightly more craftsman-esque in font. Kinda like the Welcome to Takoma Park – Azalea City sign on Piney Branch just as you enter Tk Pk from Takoma DC. I'm sure we have to use the town seal but I also really like the historic quality of the original 1887 Takoma Park promotional materials for Suburban Homes from B.F. Gilbert - in lieu of the city seal.
- I like the design of the signs. If there is inadequate budget for all types, I believe priority should be given to vehicular identification. I question whether the tertiary signs are

necessary, although they are attractive. Same goes for the identification signs, although I like the idea of art display below.